

- Year  
1925 - met Winthrop O. Sargent, World War I flying instructor of Holyoke, Mass. He gave me my first airplane ride over the Sheridan Street Tobacco Plantation for the purpose of influencing me, as a member of the Chicopee Board of Aldermen, to interest our city government to purchase the land as a site for the construction of a Municipal Airport.
- 1938 - The Secretary of our Planning Commission, Mr. Anthony F. Pimental, <sup>and Mr. Ted Spetela, Chairman</sup> called my attention to the Wilcox Air Base Bill, as passed by the 74th Congress, Public No. 263. A meeting was held with the Chicopee Planning Board, and a decision was made to have the Secretary, Mr. Pimental, draw up plans and secure necessary data to be forwarded to the War Department.
- Nov. 22, 1938 - Telegram sent to the Secretary of War, Mr. Harry H. Woodring.
- Nov. 23, 1938 - Reply:

WAR DEPARTMENT  
 WASHINGTON

November 23, 1938.

Honorable Anthony J. Stonina,  
 Mayor of Chicopee,  
 Chicopee, Massachusetts

Dear Mayor Stonina:

Receipt is acknowledged of your telegram of November 22d relative to land which your city offers for the development of an Army air base.

The matter is receiving consideration and I shall be pleased to advise you further at the earliest practicable date.

Sincerely yours,

Harry E. Woodring (Signed)  
 Secretary of War

WAR DEPARTMENT  
Washington, D. C.

Dec. 1, 1938

Honorable Anthony J. Stonina,  
Mayor of Chicopee,  
Chicopee, Massachusetts

Dear Mayor Stonina:

In further reply to your telegram of November 22 requesting consideration of a site at Chicopee for the installation of an Army Air Base, you are informed that studies are now being conducted by the War Department to determine the proper locations for such additional air bases as it may be practicable to establish under the provisions of the Wilcox Bill.

You are assured that, prior to a final determination of the location for an air base in the Northeastern area, consideration will be given to the advantages offered by sites in the vicinity of your city.

Your interest in this matter is much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Harry H. Woodring (Signed)  
Secretary of War

June 10, 1939 - appointed an Aviation Committee, comprising ten persons,  
headed by:

- Dr. John P. Kennedy-Chairman-(now Postmaster of Chicopee)
- Leo P. Senecal-Secretary- Member of the Board of Assessors
- Helen M. Hobak-Clerk-Secretary to the Mayor
- Joseph Lafleur, President of the Board of Aldermen
- Henry Godek, Chairman of the Board of Assessors
- Anthony P. Pimental, Secretary of the Planning Commission
- Richard R. Bailey, Registrar of Voters
- George H. Lewis, Member of the Board of Aldermen
- Walter J. Trybulski, Member of the Board of Aldermen
- Thomas P. Holliman *who suggested the formation of this*

**HALLINAN** Committee.

This committee was appointed for the purpose of deciding on proper methods of procedure to interest the Army Air Corps in the selection of the Chicopee site as Northeast Army Air Base.

*Thaddeus M. Szetka, Chairman of the Planning Commission*

June 11, 1939 - I called on Col. Charles E. Speaks, President of the Fisk Rubber Corp. and asked him for his cooperation and assistance in our efforts to obtain the air base. He assured me of his wholehearted support and said that he would be going to Washington within the next few days and would gladly take the matter up with the proper authorities.

June 26, 1939 - Col. Speaks submitted to me a report of his Washington visit with Assistant Secretary of War, Johnson, and Major General Arnold, Chief of the Air Forces.

June 27, 1939 - At a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, a motion was made by Alderman, George H. Lewis, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, that Col. Charles E. Speaks be granted full power of attorney to act in behalf of the City of Chicopee with any and all Federal officials in regards to the proposed Army Air Base in Chicopee.

July 24, 1939 - Dr. John F. Kennedy, Chairman of the Aviation Committee, Congressman Charles R. Clason and I, conferred in Washington with the Chief of the Air Corps, Maj. Gen. H. H. Arnold and urged that Chicopee be chosen as a site for the Northeast Army Air Base. We pointed out that Chicopee has excellent facilities for such a base, and that the City is prepared to offer full cooperation to War Department authorities. Before leaving Washington, we contacted members of Congress and our Senators and sought their help in having Chicopee chosen.

July 28, 1939 - A Board of General Officers, comprising of -  
 Maj. Gen. Delos Emmons, Commanding General of the Headquarters Air Force,  
 Brig. Gen. George V. Strong, Asst. Chief of Staff in Charge of War Plans,  
 Brig. Gen. George P. Tynes, Asst. Chief of Staff in Charge of Supplies,  
 Lt. Col. E. R. Harmon (now General), Tech. Officer, assigned to the Chief of Staff, who acted as recorder,

arrived at Westfield Airport to inspect the proposed sites in this area. The Chicopee Aviation Committee showed them our proposed site and they were duly impressed with the same. They made a thorough study of the entire area, in order to avoid the expansion problem which confronts Mitchell Field, New York. They instructed us to get the following information for them upon their return from visiting other proposed sites in New England.

1. Legislative Act to give the Army complete jurisdiction over the territory.
2. Bombing Range.
3. Sentiment of the people in the community toward the Army.
4. Whether or not the officers' and enlisted men's children could go to school without paying tuition.
5. Closing of the highways affecting Granby, South Hadley Falls, Ludlow, Chicopee, and, also, the highways under the jurisdiction of Hampden and Hampshire Counties.

July 28 (Cont'd)

6. Relocation of five miles of high tension power lines.
7. Railroad extension to the base.
8. Right of way for sewerage disposal.
9. Water supply.

Immediate contact was made with Governor Leverett B. Saltonstall, Chairman of the County Commissioners, Charles W. Bray, and other officials. Dr. John F. Kennedy, with other members of the Aviation Committee held conferences and other lengthy discussions with the officials concerning the above problems. We were assured by them their full cooperation.

Aug. 1, 1939 - The Board of Army Generals on their return were given assurance of full cooperation on all matters that were requested by them. Based on our cooperation, the Generals drew up tentative plans for the land they considered necessary to acquire in Chicopee and Ludlow.

Aug. 3, 1939 - Filed Petition to State Senate:

"Petition of Anthony J. Stonina, mayor of Chicopee, that consent of the Commonwealth be granted to the acquisition by the United States of America of certain lands in the City of Chicopee and the Town of Ludlow for the purpose of an Army Air Base."

Aug. 4, 1939 - Petition presented to State Senate by Senator Chester T. Skibinski; concurred by Senate and House of Representatives.

Aug. 8, 1939 - A detail of Army Engineers arrived under the command of Lt. C. E. Bagby to plot a map of Air Base Area for the War Department.

Aug. 12, 1939 - Acts, 1939, Chapter 463. - Passed and became a law.

"An Act granting the consent of the Commonwealth to the acquisition by the United States of America certain lands in the City of Chicopee and the Town of Ludlow for the purpose of an Army Air Base."

Aug. 15, 1939 - A committee appointed by the Mayor visited Mitchell Field to obtain information relative to possible benefits that the City would derive if the Air Base was located here, for the purpose of proving to the opposition that the Base would be beneficial to the Community.

Aug. 17, 1939 - The Chicopee School Board voted to allow the children of the Army Base Military Personnel to attend the Chicopee Schools without paying a tuition fee.

Aug. 22, 1939 - A Military Ball given by the Polish Women's Political and Social Club of Chicopee, at the Oxford Country Club, was indicative of the sentiment of the citizens of Chicopee towards the Army.

Aug. 24, 1939 - A conference was called at <sup>his</sup> request by Governor Leverett B. Saltonstall at Boston. Attended by:

Governor Leverett B. Saltonstall  
 Brig. Gen. George P. Tyler  
 Dr. John F. Kennedy, Chairman, Aviation Committee  
 - Howard S. French, President of the Boston & Maine Railroad  
 - Fred L. Hunt, Vice-President of the Western Massachusetts <sup>Worcester</sup>  
*Eugene C. Hullman* District Water Commission  
 - Carroll W. Meina, Secretary to the Governor  
 - Francis McKeown, Chairman of the State Public Utilities Comm.

Arrangements were made for:

1. Building four miles of railroad extension to the base.
2. Relocating five miles of high tension power lines.
3. Closing of highways, affecting three towns, namely Ludlow, Granby, and South Hadley Falls, ~~and~~ two counties, Hampden and Hampshire.
4. The location of a bombing range.

Brig. Gen. Tyler said that he was satisfied with the conference and that he would file his report to the Board of General Officers.

Sept. 7, 1939 - A conference was held in the private offices of Secretary of War, Harry H. Woodring, at Washington.

Attended by: Senator Davis I. Walsh - Massachusetts  
 Mayor Roger L. Putnam of Springfield, Mass.  
 Mayor Anthony J. Stomina of Chicopee, Mass.

All the necessary data of our proposed site ~~was~~ well presented. Secretary of War, Woodring, was impressed with our presentation.

Sept. 15, 1939 - Secretary of War, Harry H. Woodring, announced that the Army Air Corps has selected the Chicopee-Ludlow site for the Northeast Air Base.

Sept. 19, 1939 - Maj. Murdock A. McPadden, Construction Quartermaster, connected with the Quartermaster General's Office of the War Dept., H. O. Orce, Chief Clerk, and M. H. Gilpin, Chief Engineer, arrived in Chicopee to make a preliminary survey.

Sept. 19, 1939 - The City Property Committee of Chicopee, for the sum of \$1.00, agreed to allow the United States Army Construction Quartermaster the use of the building known as the Isolation Hospital for their headquarters.

Sept. 21, 1939 - Col. Rigby D. Valliant, Chief of the Real Estate Branch of the Quartermaster General's Department, arrived, accompanied by Atty. Colin G. Bickford, also of the Division, to make a preliminary survey attending condemnation and purchase of land included in the Chicopee - Ludlow site.

Oct. 17, 1939 - Federal Judge, Elisha H. Brewster, signed an order of seizure for 4,269 acres of land by condemnation procedure. It is interesting to note that one ~~part~~ of Chicopee was taken over by the Army for the purpose of building this base.

*August*

Oct. 25, 1939 - Notices were posted within the Air Base Area to the effect that the United States Government now technically owns the property.

Oct. 31, 1939 - Major Murdock A. McFadden informed the land owners that the Government now owns all of the land within the boundaries defined for the air base, and while the law states that by November 25th, all the persons must have vacated their property, actually it may happen that the people may not be pushed out in the cold.

Dec. 1, 1939 - Northeast Army Air Base given the name of Westover Field. Named in honor of late Chief of Air Corps, Major General Oscar Westover, who was killed at Burbank, California, September 21, 1938.

Note: In appreciation for services rendered to the United States Army, a topographical survey marker was named - "Storina".

ANTHONY J. STORINA

<sup>what</sup>  
The Board of Army General<sup>s</sup> and their assistants knew ~~the~~ <sup>their</sup> needs and was of strategic value for the defense of the Nation. Their recommendation for the selection of the Chicopee-Ludlow site was based on their findings which fulfilled the necessary requirements by the United States Army Air Corps. They did not allow any political pressure to influence them otherwise. It is fine to know that we have such a group of high ranking officers who are contributing so much for America. It was a pleasure to work with ~~them~~ and I have the highest respect and admiration for them.

*these men*

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